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1908

MISSION AT MID-CENTURY: CONQUER BLINDNESS

1958

In issuing this report, covering
the National Society for the
its 50th year of uninterrupted service



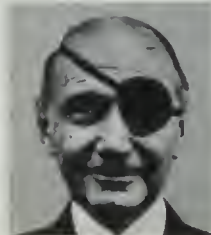
Louisa Lee Schuyler



F. Park Lewis, M.D.



Helen Keller



The Hon. Lewis W. Douglas



Mason H. Bigelow

its activities in 1957,

Prevention of Blindness enters

on behalf of human eyesight...

... This, then, is an appropriate time for reflection and resolution—reflection on the progress toward the prevention of blindness which our first half-century has brought—resolution that our second fifty years shall see progress multiplied many times.

We salute those whose determination brought our Society into being and helped, over the years, to win public acceptance of its objectives. Among those whose memories will remain forever strong in the annals of the ceaseless battle against blindness are Louisa Lee Schuyler, Helen Keller, F. Park Lewis, M.D., Lillian D. Wald, Edith and Winifred Holt, Theodore Roosevelt, William Fellowes Morgan, Winifred Hathaway—and many more.

It is proper at this time to note that such causes of blindness as babies' sore eyes, trachoma and retrolental fibroplasia—each a major scourge at one time—have yielded to the

pressures applied by your Society through its efforts in research, education and preventive service.

It is good to know that during the 50 years of our work blindness due to infectious diseases has been cut in half, that blindness due to injuries has decreased by 75 percent.

Turning, however, from past triumphs to the problems of the present and the future, we recognize that mighty foes remain in the field against us—glaucoma, cataract, uveitis, retinitis pigmentosa. Each exacts its relentless toll of vision every day. Each must be fought vigorously in the days ahead.

To all who, as members and contributors of time, talent and funds, helped make past growth possible, we extend the Society's heartfelt thanks. Your continuing support assures that the Society's mid-century mission—conquer blindness—may confidently be expected to achieve its inspiring goal.

MASON H. BIGELOW
President

ONE OF THE OLDEST of the voluntary national health agencies, the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness has experimented for years in methods of enlisting citizen action in behalf of its objectives.

In 1957, the results of that experimentation were put into effect, with the establishment of additional state affiliates so that now all save a few states are covered. Thousands of volunteers, many of whom have worked closely with the Society for years, flocked to the newly displayed banners of organization. In each case, state affiliates enjoying the highest professional guidance undertook expanded programs of sight conservation, seeking to find and help the estimated one-million Americans with undetected, sight-robbing glaucoma; searching out the preschool children too young to realize they have defective vision and unable to make their defects known to their parents; enlisting financial support for the research which must be undertaken if the causes of most of today's blindness are to be rooted out and eliminated.

From each part of the country came diverse contributions of major value in the battle against blindness. The pages of this report do not permit a comprehensive listing, but some outstanding demonstrations of support are:

Item: From Connecticut's Aetna Affiliated Life Insurance Companies came a new film, "Betty Sees A Bird," which, in graphic authority, is already at work in the training of hundreds of new volunteer vision screeners of young children.

Item: From Oklahoma came word of an informative eye health display seen by thousands attending that state's outstanding Semi-Centennial Celebration.

Item: From Indiana came a second film, "Fair Chance For Tommy," which, a gift from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, will help America's 78,000 partially seeing children win their rightful educational opportunities.

Item: From Texas, Kentucky, Michigan, New York State, Georgia and many other areas came reports of the finding



Procedures developed by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness enable trained Volunteer workers ↑ to identify preschool youngsters actually in need of eye care . . . too young to know it themselves. ↓ Nearly 14,000 preschool children received volunteer vision screening in 1957; in some projects more than seven percent of them were found to be in need of some kind of vision care or treatment. Failure to locate them could have resulted in permanent vision damage or educational or psychological setbacks of lasting harm.



of young children with vision defects—in time to steer them to care before permanent harm had been done.

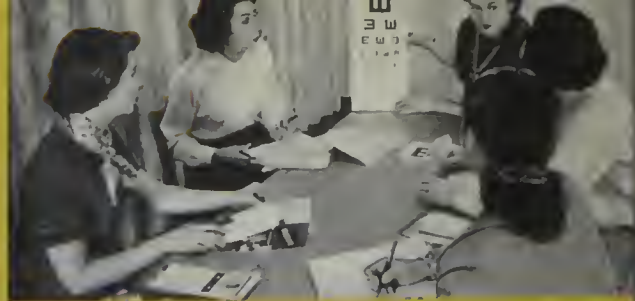
Item: From California, Connecticut, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Tennessee came the news that many unknowing sufferers from glaucoma—including physicians—had been located and placed under treatment for the insidious condition which menaced their vision.

Item: From Nevada, North Carolina, Florida, New Mexico, Utah, Montana, Puerto Rico, Iowa, Virginia and Washington State came reports of more effective organizational structures, each a prelude to expanded programs of service to the people of the state.

An exciting and rewarding activity in which nearly all state affiliates participated in 1957 was sharing in the efforts conducted in the Federal Service Campaign for National Health Agencies. One of the ten such voluntary agencies approved for inclusion in this campaign by the Federal

Government, the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness welcomed the opportunity through its national and state offices to provide eye health information and more effective services to four million military and civilian U. S. personnel and their families.

With the help of a grant from the New York Community Trust and with the valued cooperation of the New York State Commission for the Blind, a careful investigation was made in 1957 into the reasons why some persons with operable cataracts fail to have surgery which would restore precious sight. How well do they understand the oculist's recommendations? What are the factors which affect their decision to accept surgery? What obstacles—imagined or real—interfere with providing eye surgery once it is advisable? Twelve graduate students of the New York School of Social Work of Columbia University, under the direction of Professor Irving Miller, conducted interviews in depth and analyzed a variety of possible factors. It was found that 71 of 157, or 45 per cent, of men and women recently registered as blind from cataracts were considered treatable, but that fewer



than half had followed the advice as to surgery. Financial status was relatively unimportant in failing to have surgery—more important were fear, and lack of understanding of the diagnosis and of the possibilities of treatment in improving vision. Among the 157 blind from cataracts, 13 per cent when asked, "What do you think is wrong with your eyes?" replied that they did not know. As Miss M. Anne McGuire, director of the New York State Commission for the Blind, has pointed out, this study shows clearly the need for intensifying the prevention program so that more effective case services will be provided for every community and so that all of our people, especially older men and women living alone, will be better informed about eye health and guided to take advantage of already existing services.

Vision screening techniques, in which volunteers are trained by NSPB staff representatives ←, resulted from research studies of all possible testing methods. Participating in these studies, besides the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, over the years were the United States Children's Bureau, Washington University of St. Louis and the St. Louis Public School System, as well as many professional and technical group representatives.



Key to success of the growing program for vision screening of preschool children is the volunteer ↑, whose gift of time for training and testing constitutes a major contribution toward prevention of blindness in the United States.

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MID-CENTURY:

IT IS PARADOXICAL that in 1957, a year in which new advances in science seemed to be developing more rapidly than the human brain could comprehend, the causes of most blinding eye diseases remained mysterious. Yet the dramatic elimination of retrolental fibroplasia by researchers, aided in part by contributors to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, left no doubt that the toughness of these scientific problems would eventually yield to the probing minds of trained investigators.

To help sustain the work of these who seek to dispel the clouds of bafflement from the causes of blindness, your Society, in 1957, made research grants to the institutions listed on the next page.

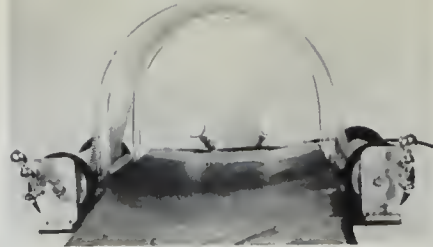
A significant research development during 1957 was announced at the December meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

Major General Walter A. DeLamater made known at that time details of the newly organized Knights Templar Eye Foundation through which grants totalling \$225,000 were made to several well known medical colleges and other non-profit organizations for research into causes of blinding eye diseases.

Among those selected to undertake special research projects in this field was your National Society which received the sum of \$15,000.

EYE RESEARCH GRANTS MADE BY THE NATIONAL SOCIETY IN 1957

University of Texas Medical Branch Hospitals Galveston, Texas	Effect of chemical solutions on eye during surgery
Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons New York City	Study of changes in orbit from tumors and implants
Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn Brooklyn, New York	Biochemistry of retinitis pigmentosa
New York Eye & Ear Infirmary New York City	Electrophysiology in diagnosis of eye disease
University of Nebraska Medical School Omaha, Nebraska	Effects of Diabetes on the Retina
Wills Eye Hospital Philadelphia, Pa.	Circulation of the choroid
Washington University Medical School St. Louis, Missouri	Experimental changes in the Retina
Medical College of Georgia Augusta, Georgia	Bacteriology of Uveitis
Boston University School of Medicine Boston, Mass.	Investigation of a Visual Acuity Test for Early Infancy
University of California Medical Center San Francisco, California	Treatment of Infections of the Cornea



Aided by a grant from the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Boston researchers are developing a rotating device which, when perfected and put in production, may permit the detection of common vision defects in infants.

Commenting on the importance of the Knights Templar appropriation, Mason H. Bigelow, NSPB president, said, "We now have ample evidence that the vital need for extended research in prevention of eye diseases is gaining recognition in the public mind as a major philanthropy.

"The stimulus thus given to researchers in many parts of the country," he continued, "will undoubtedly result in much new light being shed on problems hitherto obscured solely through lack of adequate funds for proper scientific investigation." By such examples was it made clear in 1957 that the fight against blindness in the laboratories is being intensified. As still more support is enlisted for basic research, the prospect for victory will brighten.

SINCE HALF OF ALL BLINDNESS in the United States is needless in the light of current scientific knowledge, the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness devotes a major portion of its efforts to spread sight-saving information among all elements of the vast American public.

In 1957, these efforts included a major scientific conference, held in New York in April in conjunction with the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology. The resulting exchanges of information on research, techniques, and experiences with grassroots preventive services will have lasting effect.

During the year, your Society demonstrated simple tests for glaucoma to audiences of family physicians, in the hope that such tests might be included in routine physical examinations. Similarly, scores of films for audiences ranging from young children to skilled professionals were supplied by the Society in all parts of the country. A major eye health educational campaign for the public was conducted in September with the valuable cooperation of the Advertising Council,

the nation's television and radio stations, magazines, newspapers, house organs, railroads, airlines and transit advertising units.

Throughout the year, informative publications on various phases of eye health and safety were made available to many thousands of persons in factories, service clubs, schools and clinics.



Western Hemisphere sight conservation leaders measured prevention of blindness gains at four-day conference sponsored by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness and the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology. Left to right: former U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, Adolf A. Berle, Jr.; Brittain F. Payne, PAAO president; Howard M. Rusk, M.D., rehabilitation editor, The New York Times.

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MID-CENTURY:

WHEN THE National Society for the Prevention of Blindness began in 1908 there were no special facilities anywhere in this country for the education of partially seeing children. In 1957, such children were being given proper educational advantages in 34 states, Hawaii and the District of Columbia.

Moreover, in the years in which special aids—notably good classroom lighting, seating, book racks, etc.—were being developed to help partially seeing children, the value of these aids for all children was being proven. Every modern classroom anywhere today owes much to the pioneering fight waged for partially seeing children by the late Winifred Hathaway and her associates.

But the challenge of the future is implicit in the fact that, as 1957 came to a close, barely eleven percent of America's 78,000 partially seeing children were receiving fair educational opportunities. Hopeful, however, was the report made by the Society's consultant in education: "It has become increasingly apparent that school administrators and direc-

tors of special education, through vision screening programs and follow-up, and as the result of parent interest, are making serious efforts to find and bring services to children with a visual problem."

The new film, "Fair Chance For Tommy," produced with a grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, will help all classroom teachers to give partially seeing children the special assistance they need. Distribution of the film in the months to come will speed general understanding of the needs of visually handicapped children and the wisdom of giving them fair educational opportunities. Mrs. Winifred Hathaway and others had proved the point: given a bit of extra help to compensate for their visual handicaps, partially seeing children, growing into mature citizens, have much to contribute in return.





Top business recognition of NSPB's Wise Owl Club came May 8, 1957 when ↑ Keith Funston (left), president of the New York Stock Exchange, formally enrolled the club's 12,000th member. Enrollee was Ralph Greco (right), an employee of Republic Aviation, Farmingdale, N. Y. Also present was Thomas Davis, treasurer, Republic Aviation.

Producer Leo Trachtenberg gives ← Amityville, N. Y. school children some coaching before "shooting" scene for NSPB's new film, "Fair Chance For Tommy". Motion picture was made possible by a grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

IN 1908, accidents were responsible for about 16 percent of all blindness; America's expanding industrialization had not yet developed safety patterns of modern times. The prevention of accidental blindness was one of the reasons underlying the foundation of the National Society.

By 1957, more than 13,860 employees involved in accidents were enrolled in the Wise Owl Club because they had cheated blindness through wearing suitable eye protection.

In between there has been a half century of progress in equipment research, methods study, labor-management cooperation—all adding up to better eye safety practice.

Today, the Wise Owl Club sponsored by the National Society has active local chapters in 1,950 plants located in every state of the union, in District of Columbia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Canada. Each chapter, an integral part of an industry's safety program, carries out a daily, on-the-job effort to reduce eye accidents and prevent loss of vision.

As 1957 closed, the National Society was preparing to recognize enrollment in the Wise Owl Club, of its 14,000th member. Like all his predecessors, he became a daily reminder to the other 2,883,405 employees in Wise-Owl covered plants, proof positive that eye safety pays off. For every Wise Owl is a man or woman who, but for the eye protection worn, would have actually lost precious sight.

For fifty years, thoughtful men and women have helped advance the cause of prevention of blindness by including bequests to the National Society in their wills. Their philanthropy has lived on in service.

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A HALF-CENTURY OF THOUGHTFULNESS

Those who wish, similarly, to guide their bequests into areas where much needs to be done that *can* be done are invited to employ this form of bequest:

*"I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of
dollars for its corporate purposes."*

Attorneys, trust officers and others concerned with the drawing of wills are invited to learn more of the work of the National Society by writing to its national headquarters, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, New York.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

☐ Benefactor:
\$1,000 and over

☐ Sustaining Member:
\$50-99

☐ Subscribing Member:
\$5-9

☐ Patron:
\$100-999

☐ Contributing Member:
\$10-49

☐ Associate Member:
\$2-5

SUMMARY OF FINANCE

The following statement is based on the report of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Company, by whom the accounts of the Society, excluding state chapters, were audited.

The work of the Society—research, education, and preventive services covering all phases of sight conservation—is carried on by volunteers working with a paid professional staff qualified to deal with the many technical facts and procedures involved. Members of the board of directors and members of the various special committees who act as consultants on scientific and technical matters serve without remuneration. All budgets and expenditures are reported to the National Information Bureau which accredits national philanthropic agencies.

TOTAL RESOURCES AT DECEMBER 31, 1956

\$848,045.72

Expenditures

Research	\$ 57,222.13
Professional Education	91,001.25
Public Education in Eye Health	167,750.60
Program Support	49,483.86
Program Development and Consultation Service	43,244.48
Industrial Program	34,350.53
Claucoma Program	13,620.09
Cooperative Projects with Other National Agencies	2,312.00
International Cooperation and Activities	200.00
Administration	24,311.61
Pensions	4,138.32
	<hr/> 487,634.87

Surplus adjustment and transfer in establishing State Chapter

3,273.57

Total Deductions

490,908.44

\$357,137.28

Income — Operating Fund

Contributions and Memberships	\$253,242.70
For Special Projects	17,706.00
Publications, Sight-Saving Review Subscriptions, Wise Owl Club Memberships, Vision Testing Charts, Films, Posters, Honoraria and Royalties	39,074.81
Income, Endowment and Reserve Funds	35,775.47
Income from Trust Funds (not administered by the Society)	13,788.63
	<hr/> 359,587.61

Legacies

69,234.27

Total Income

428,821.88

TOTAL RESOURCES AT DECEMBER 31, 1957

\$785,959.16*

*NOTE: Does not include the income and expenditures or the resources of the National Society's state Chapters.

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IN 1904, first year of service of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, it was known that the surest way for an individual to safeguard his sight against the threat of blinding eye disease was to arrange for a competent eye examination. The intervening 50 years have in no way diminished the validity of that advice. If you are over 40, have your eyes examined every two years, at least. If you are a parent, see that your children, whose eyes change as their bodies grow, have a competent eye examination before entering school and once every school year thereafter.

AND . . . to help support the research, education and preventive service which may *save your sight*, make a new contribution to the

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

1790 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.